

# Guidelines for Careers in the Child Nutrition Profession

## EDUCATION PATHWAYS IN THE CHILD NUTRITION PROFESSION

The following career-goal charts outline the education pathways for the eight child nutrition positions. Three education and training options are suggested for each position.

Option 1 illustrates an essential level of instruction.

Option 2 provides a *basic* or mid-level education for all positions.

Option 3 is the *recommended* education pathway.

### CAREER GOAL: **SUBSTITUTE**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Hours or units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Food for Child Nutrition Personnel (3 hours)</li> </ul>	3 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry Skills for Child Nutrition Personnel (10 hours):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food Safety (3 hours)</li> <li>- Food Preparation (2.5 hours)</li> <li>- Nutrition and Menus (2.5 hours)</li> <li>- Team Building and Career Planning (2 hours)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	10 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the Child Nutrition Program* (2 units):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry Skills for Child Nutrition Personnel (10 hours)</li> <li>- Sanitation and Safety (10 hours)</li> <li>- Shaping Healthy Meals (10 hours)</li> <li>- Beginning Recordkeeping (10 hours)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	40 hours or 2 units

### CAREER GOAL: **GENERAL ASSISTANT**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Hours or units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry Skills for Child Nutrition Personnel (10 hours):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food Safety (3 hours)</li> <li>- Food Preparation (2.5 hours)</li> <li>- Nutrition and Menus (2.5 hours)</li> <li>- Team Building and Career Planning (2 hours)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	10 hours or 1/2 unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods** (3 units) <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Introduction to the Child Nutrition Program (2 units) <b>PLUS</b> 1 or more units in college core courses.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sanitation and Safety</li> <li>- Principles of Food Preparation</li> <li>- Introduction to the Food Service Industry</li> <li>- Child Growth and Development</li> <li>- Nutrition and Health</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	72 hours or 3 units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods** (3 units) <b>PLUS</b> 6 or more units in college core courses. Examples are:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sanitation and Safety</li> <li>- Principles of Food Preparation</li> <li>- Introduction to the Food Service Industry</li> <li>- Child Growth and Development</li> <li>- Nutrition and Health</li> <li>- Quantity Food Preparation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	9 units

\* Cuisine for Kids (12 hours) may be substituted for one of the listed courses.

\*\* Includes 10 hours in Sanitation and Safety.

CAREER GOAL: **TECHNICAL ASSISTANT**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Hours or units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry Skills for Child Nutrition Personnel (10 hours)</li> <li>• Cuisine for Kids (12 hours)</li> </ul>	22 hours or 1 unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods (3 units)* <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Introduction to the Child Nutrition Program (2 units) <b>PLUS</b> 6 or more units in college core courses.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sanitation and Safety</li> <li>- Principles of Food Preparation</li> <li>- Introduction to the Food Service Industry</li> <li>- Child Growth and Development</li> <li>- Nutrition and Health</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	9 units	Completion of college Certificate of Achievement with a major in the child nutrition program, food service, or business <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods (3 units)*</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management (3 units)</li> </ul>	24–28 units

CAREER GOAL: **SITE MANAGER**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Degree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the Child Nutrition Program** (2 units)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry Skills for Child Nutrition Personnel (10 hours)</li> <li>- Sanitation and Safety (10 hours)</li> <li>- Shaping Healthy Meals (10 hours)</li> <li>- Beginning Recordkeeping (10 hours)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	40 hours or 2 units	Courses/units required by college for Dietary Services Certificate <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods (3 units)*</li> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> </ul>	11–18 units	Courses/units required by college for an associate degree <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods (3 units)*</li> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> <li>• Other supervisory/management courses</li> </ul>	A.A. or A.S. degree

CAREER GOAL: **SUPERVISOR**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Hours or units	Course or program	Degree	Course or program	Degree
Courses/units required by college for Dietary Services Certificate <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods (3 units)*</li> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> </ul>	11–18 units	Courses/units required by college for an associate degree <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Skills△Basic Foods (3 units)</li> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> </ul>	A.A. or A.S. degree	Courses/units required by college or university for a bachelor's degree*** <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> </ul>	B.A. or B.S. degree

\* Includes 10 hours in Sanitation and Safety.

\*\* Cuisine for Kids (12 hours) may be substituted for one of the listed courses.

\*\*\* Degree in foods and nutrition, business, administration, or education. Eligibility for registration by the American Dietetic Association is recommended.

CAREER GOAL: **NUTRITION EDUCATION SPECIALIST**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Degree	Course or program	Degree	Course or program	Degree
Courses/units required by college for a bachelor's degree* <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Teaching Strategies (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> </ul>	B.A. or B.S. degree	Courses/units required by college for a bachelor's degree* <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Teaching Strategies (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management or Administration (3 units)</li> </ul>	B.A. or B.S. degree	Courses/units required by college for a master's degree* <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Teaching Strategies (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management or Administration (3 units)</li> </ul>	M.A. or M.S. degree

CAREER GOAL: **DIRECTOR**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Degree	Course or program	Degree	Course or program	Degree
Courses/units required by college for an associate degree <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> </ul>	A.A. or A.S. degree	Courses/units required by college for a bachelor's degree <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Administration (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> <li>• Fiscal Management (2–3 units)</li> <li>• Effective Teaching Strategies (3 units)</li> </ul>	B.A. or B.S. degree	Courses/units required by college for a bachelor's degree** <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Administration (3 units)</li> <li>• Menu Design (3 units)</li> <li>• Fiscal Management (2–3 units)</li> <li>• Effective Teaching Strategies (3 units)</li> <li>• Other courses in child health/nutrition, communications, management, marketing, and education</li> </ul>	B.A. or B.S. degree

CAREER GOAL: **ADMINISTRATOR**

Education Pathways					
Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Course or program	Degree	Course or program	Degree	Course or program	Degree
Courses/units required by college for a bachelor's degree <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Administration (3 units)</li> <li>• Fiscal Management (3 units)</li> </ul>	B.A. or B.S. degree	Courses/units required by college for a bachelor's degree** <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Administration (3 units)</li> <li>• Fiscal Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Other courses in child health/nutrition, communications, management, marketing, and education</li> </ul>	B.A. or B.S. degree	Courses/units required by college or university for a master's degree** <b>PLUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program Administration (3 units)</li> <li>• Fiscal Management (3 units)</li> <li>• Other courses in child health/nutrition, communications, management, marketing, and education</li> </ul>	M.A., M.S., or M.B.A. degree

\* Degree in nutrition education, public health nutrition, or related fields. Eligibility for registration by the American Dietetic Association.

\*\* Degree in foods and nutrition, business, administration, or education. Eligibility for registration by the American Dietetic Association is highly recommended.

## COURSES DESIGNED FOR CHILD NUTRITION PERSONNEL

Course descriptions and other information on the courses listed below may be secured from the California Department of Education, Nutrition Education and Training Program, 560 J Street, Room 270, Sacramento, CA 95814. The toll-free number is (800) 952-5609, or you may call (916) 322-4792.

COURSES	POSITION LEVELS				
	Substitute/ General Assistant	Technical Assistant	Manager	Supervisor/ Specialist	Director/ Administrator
Short Courses*					
• Entry Skills for Child Nutrition Personnel** 10 hours	✓	✓			
• Sanitation and Safety 10 hours	✓	✓	✓		
• Shaping Healthy Meals 10 hours	✓	✓	✓		
• Beginning Recordkeeping 10 hours	✓	✓	✓		
• Cuisine for Kids 12 hours	✓	✓	✓		
Overview Courses					
• Basic Skills△Basic Foods 3 units	✓	✓	✓		
• Child Nutrition Program Management 3 units		✓	✓	✓	
• Child Nutrition Program Administration 3 units				✓	✓
Specific Topic Courses					
• Achieving Financial Goals 12 hours				✓	✓
• Effective Teaching Strategies 3 units				✓	✓
• Healthy Professional Cooking 30 hours			✓	✓	✓
• Menu Design 3 units		✓	✓	✓	✓
• Reinventing School Food Service 6 hours				✓	✓
• Target: Communications 6 hours				✓	✓
• Target Your Market 8 hours				✓	✓
School Meals Initiative Courses					
• Food-Based Menu Planning 16 hours		✓	✓	✓	✓
• Nutrient Standard Menu Planning 16 hours		✓	✓	✓	✓

\* Four of the five short courses may be grouped together under the title "Introduction to the Child Nutrition Program."

\*\* Videotapes covering the four major topics in this course, Entry Skills for Child Nutrition Personnel, are available on loan from the Healthy Kids Resource Center, (510)-670-4581.

# THE CHALLENGE

Model child nutrition programs in school districts and in child development agencies are emerging throughout California. The child nutrition programs will need qualified staff to maintain the existing programs and to expand these programs to additional school districts and agencies. To reach program goals, child nutrition personnel must know how to plan, prepare, and serve meals that meet recommended levels for optimum health and nutrition while also achieving cost-effective operation and management standards.

The focus of this brochure is on the educational background that individuals should consider when aspiring to a position in the child nutrition program. The three options that are suggested for each career level offer flexibility depending on the commitment the person can make to a sequential education and training program. The brochure provides guidance to personnel who wish to enhance knowledge and skills in their current position and also for students who are beginning their career plans.



## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF POSITIONS

- A **substitute** is assigned on a temporary basis to replace absent kitchen employees and performs such tasks as preparing food, serving meals, and washing dishes.
- A **general assistant** assists with the preparation and serving of food in child nutrition programs and often serves as a cashier and takes program responsibility at the point of sale.
- A **technical assistant** is responsible for preparing food, cooking, baking, serving, and maintaining production records.
- A **site manager** is responsible for the supervision of general and technical assistants and students at a kitchen site and for the supervision of meals at remote sites. The role of the site manager may vary, depending on the size of the district and/or school.

- A **supervisor** coordinates child nutrition programs in a region of the district or agency or is assigned districtwide activities as specified by the director or administrator of child nutrition programs.
- A **nutrition education specialist** promotes nutrition instruction in the classroom through coordination with teachers, parents, child nutrition program staff, and students.
- A **director** is responsible for the overall operation of child nutrition programs under the supervision of a school district administrator.
- A **child nutrition program administrator** is responsible for the overall operation of a program in a district of more than 50,000 average daily attendance.

The descriptions are adapted from American School Food Service Association titles and definitions.

### ***Contacts for Additional Information***

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Discuss your interest in additional courses and training with other district or agency-level staff.</li><li>2. Contact your local community college or state university for information on courses in nutrition, food service management, and business.</li><li>3. Request information from your local high school Adult Education Office on how to secure a high school equivalency diploma if you were not able to finish high school. You may also request a listing of courses in English and Arithmetic and courses in Spanish, Typing, Writing, and Computer Skills.</li><li>4. Contact a California Professional Nutrition Education and Training (CAL-PRO-NET) Center for information on courses and career planning:</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- California Polytechnic University, Pomona, (909) 869-4285</li><li>- Fresno City College, (209) 442-4600, ext. 8312</li><li>- San Jose State University, (408) 924-3125</li></ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Call or write: California Department of Education Child Nutrition and Food Distribution Division Nutrition Education and Training Section 560 J Street, Room 270 Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: (916) 322-4792 Toll-free: (800) 952-5609 FAX: (916) 323-4311</li></ol>
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**An Equal Opportunity Program**—The Nutrition Education and Training Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic/national origin, age, sex, religion, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against, you should write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.